

Arizona Department of Education Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane M. Douglas

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Superintendent Douglas to Continue TUSD Monitoring

(Phoenix, Ariz. March 3, 2015) – Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas said today that the Arizona Department of Education will continue monitoring the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) for potential violations of A.R.S. §15-112 for the remainder of the school year, but that it will not withhold funding at this time.

"Given TUSD's cooperation with the monitoring process and evidence of their attempts to improve compliance with the statute, it is in the best interest of the district's students to move forward without denying any state aid," said Superintendent Douglas. "I look forward to continuing our work with Superintendent H.T. Sanchez to ensure such a measure does not become necessary in the future and commend him on his efforts over the last two months."

Douglas said the department has concluded that the District-approved curricula do not appear to violate statute. However, she said the department remains deeply concerned that some TUSD teachers are not following the curricula for the ethnic studies classes. While TUSD has clearly corrected a few situations, there is still work to be done.

As part of its monitoring process, the department has conducted an extensive review of TUSD's curricula and classroom materials for culturally relevant ethnic studies including a list of approved reading materials and its policy regarding the use of "enrichment" materials unapproved by the district's board. The department also conducted announced and unannounced visits to individual classrooms. Superintendent Diane Douglas said the department also considered the district's past failures to maintain adherence to the curricula in its decision to continue its monitoring.

Douglas and TUSD Superintendent H.T. Sanchez agreed to an action plan in January to ensure that the district's ethnic studies curricula are in accordance with statute in individual classrooms. TUSD had a 60-day period to correct the violations or be subject to a 10 percent reduction in state funds as required by statute. The 60-day period expires March 4.

"I appreciate the State Superintendent's willingness to work with our district throughout this process," said Superintendent Sanchez. "Together we were able to avoid a costly loss of funding and I remain committed to improving culturally relevant classroom instruction so that in the future monitoring will no longer be required. I am impressed with the dedication that Superintendent Douglas is showing in personally resolving this issue so that TUSD can expand culturally relevant courses while complying with state law."

The Superintendent met today with Superintendent Sanchez following the initial meeting of the department's Latino Education Advisory Council. Sanchez is a member of the council, having been invited by Superintendent Diane Douglas to participate.